CAPRARIA MEXICANA (SCROPHULARIACEAE) IN CAMERON COUNTY, TEXAS: REDISCOVERED IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

Two new sites are reported for *Capraria mexicana* (Scrophulariaceae) in the United States.

RESUMEN

Se reportan dos nuevos sitios para *Capraria mexicana* (Scrophulariaceae) en los Estados Unidos.

Capraria mexicana (Mexican Capraria) is an attractive shrub reaching 2 m in height (Fig. 1). The leaves are alternate, lanceolate, with serrate margins. The flowers emerge from the leaf axils. Corollas are regular, white, basally sympetalous, with lobes about 9 mm long. Everitt et al. (2002) provide description and a picture. Most reports of *C. mexicana* are from Tamaulipas, Mexico, with records also from Jalisco, Guerrero, and Tabasco. The southernmost collections are from Belize (Ideker 1996).

   Capraria mexicana was first discovered in the United States by Joe Ideker in 1993. He reported at least 66 mature plants plus seedlings in three small stands located at Falcon State Park near the International Falcon Reservoir in Starr County, Texas. (Ideker 1996). The plants were in a precarious location where they could be flooded with a rise in the reservoir, and they were located within a proposed drilling pad site. After communication with Joe Ideker in 1993, this species was listed as Endangered in Texas by the Texas Organization for Endangered Species (TOES). It is not considered Endangered in Mexico. Our attempt to relocate the population on 25 March 2006 was unsuccessful. Benito Trevino, well known authority on plants of Starr County, reported having seen no *Capraria* plants when he had visited the site.

   In September of 2005, while at the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge, Cameron County, Texas, we were shown a single plant of *Capraria mexicana* by Ellie Thompson, volunteer manager of the butterfly garden there. She had watched it grow from a volunteer seedling to maturity. As no nearby members of the species were known, it was assumed to be an inadvertent introduction from Starr County nursery stock.

   In March of 2006, we observed a large population of *Capraria mexicana* in Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas, along Highway 511, 0.4 miles north of Old Port Isabel Road. The population continued for at least 0.2 miles. The population is estimated to comprise several hundred individuals ranging from 0.3 m to 1.2 m tall The plants were seen growing on both sides of the highway, on saline clay, with *Opuntia engelmannii* var. *lindheimeri, Borrichia frutescens, Prosopis glandulosa* var. *glandulosa, P. reptans, Maytenus phyllanthoides, Fleischmannia incarnata, Dichanthium* sp., and *Bothriochloa* sp.

   With the presumed extirpation of the population at Falcon State Park, the Brownsville

Fig. 1. *Capraria mexicana* photographed in Cameron County, Texas, along Highway 511, 0.4 mile north of Old Port Isabel Road.

site is the only confirmed population of *Capraria mexicana* in the United States. Further surveys might reveal a population at Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge. The plants can be easily overlooked if not in flower, since the leaves greatly resemble those of *Baccharis*.

Voucher specimen: **TEXAS. Cameron Co.:** Brownsville, Hwy 511, 0.4 mi N of Old Port Isabel Road, 16 Mar 2006, *Richardson and King 3284* (BRIT, TEX).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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